

YIDDISH-TO-ENGLISH TRANSLATION

# 50 YEARS OF COMMUNAL ACTIVITY OF JULIUS LEVITT IN THE EVALUATION OF HIS FRIENDS

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Note: English portions from original Yiddish document are not repeated here

# LOST

H. Roizenblatt

Dedicated to Yudel Levitt, on this happy occasion.

You lose your way in this forest so thick,  
This forest so thick, so huge, and confused.  
You become fearful-somewhat,  
Yet you do not wish to exit.

The leaves on the trees, flutter,  
They rustle beneath your feet,  
The stillness, the shadows surround you,  
They frighten you, lure you, and draw you.

There is a glimmer through the branches,  
You are heartened, it will be over, soon.  
Yet, something..... is missing,  
it's a pity to leave this wandering.

The glimmer is extinguished, again you are lost,  
A puzzle.....something's not clear,  
Have I, in my wandering, lost my way?  
Or have I, surprisingly, found it.

The forest remains clothed in shadows,  
So secretive..... immense!  
You are frightened, and ask yourself, doubtfully,  
Do I really want to leave?

Fifty Years of Communal Activity

Of

Julius Levitt

in the evaluation  
of his friends.

Ambassador Hotel, Sunday , March 16, 1952

The Julius Levitt Jubilee Committee,  
Los Angeles, California

## Julius Levitt—The Indefatigable Cultural Activist

Mendel Elkin

Since I have known Julius Levitt--and I have known him for almost 3 decades, he has always busied himself with communal issues, and in particular with Jewish cultural issues. It starts with cultural activity in this particular Arbeiter Ring branch and proceeds on up to the highest Jewish cultural Institute--YIVO.

And between these 2 points, there are many organizations and institutions, that are involved with cultural activity and societal interests, in which Levitt is active.

Notwithstanding the fact that his managerial duties at the "Forwards" in the state of California are in themselves not a small contribution to culture, there is almost, not one organization in this city of Los Angeles, where the name Levitt is not recognized as a leader of men in these activities.

And everywhere, in every kind of organization, in which he partakes, the job is crowned with success, due to his diligence and responsible commitment to his work.

And very often, it is not unusual, that there are problems to be dealt with, and there is no dearth of aggravation, character assassination and fits of jealousy. Many good people are driven out of communal activity, for these reasons, with the feeling of bitterness. Not so with Julius Levitt. Very often, he will give in to his ego, so long as the project is successfully concluded. And

the project is of primary importance, starting with a culture club, a YIVO, and all the way to a City of Hope.

I often think, that without Julius Levitt, the wheels of the Jewish wagon in Los Angeles would not turn. And one must absolutely envy him, that his enthusiasm for his work has not waned throughout the decades that I have known him.

The Yiddish Institute of Intelligence (YIVO), where the person whose anniversary we are celebrating is a member of the Board of Directors, recognizes many of the important accomplishments of Julius Levitt for the good of the Institute, whether it be in the realm of material help, or in the realm of general connections in his city.

And so it is good, very good, that the community recognizes such an individual, that we appreciate him, very much, and we bless him with good wishes for a long life and future successes.

As for myself, I send my heartfelt blessings to my loving, dear friend, Julius Levitt, the sociable and zealous culture worker and wish him all the best.

## Julius Levitt Anniversary Committee

Los Angeles, California.

Dear Friend,

Your city can indeed be proud of her institutions and her people in leadership positions that she possesses. YIVO is especially proud to showcase such a distinguished personality as is Julius Levitt.

Julius Levitt is the ideal embodiment of a type that has played a unique role in Jewish history. Such concepts as community and the needs of the people, or the more modern person active in communal or cultural work, all of these are a concentrated expression of our position in this world and all of the ideals which have, in varied forms, fired our enthusiasm.

In these 50 years of his rich social and pioneering activity, that Julius Levitt has presented to the Jewish communal idiom, he has brought forth the justifiable gratitude of all of us.

It would be puzzling had he not been such a distinguished figure in YIVO in Los Angeles. It would also have been puzzling, if all of his activities were confined to this one area.

The idea that you are celebrating Julius Levitt's anniversary on such an impressive scale shows our deep moral gratitude for a job well done. The YIVO Institute expresses her warm greetings to his committee here in Los Angeles, and wishes the

celebrant health and long years of blessed accomplishments in the needs of the people.

With friendly greetings,  
Leibush Lehrer

Chairman of the Administrative Committee

# Julius Levitt,--A Half Century at The Rudder Of

## Communal Life

(biographical notations )

J. Tilles

To write about a half-century of community activity, is to actually write about the most fortunate half-century in Jewish life, the most tragic and the most uplifting 50 years of great inner revolutions, extraordinary challenges and shocking events. This is too great a job for my modest abilities. I wish merely, to mention briefly, the role played by J. Levitt in the inner struggles in Jewish life, which he began in his previous life as a youth in his old home and continued in his new home, and due, partly, to his effervescent and energetic personality and partly due to the position he occupies, he often is in a position of leadership in the communal movement and institutions.

J. Levitt is the youngest in a large family. He was born July 15, 1885 in Disna, Vilna Gubernia (province) to pious and well off parents. His father, a forestry broker, later the owner of an inn, became impoverished, and at the age of 14, Julius was apprenticed to Pap's paper business in Vilna. The "Bund" was already popular among the workers in the business. Levitt was drawn into the Bundist movement, and at



the **age**, of 16 he already occupied a prominent position. In the apprentice strike in Vilna, because of his height, he was more recognizable and the police had their eye on him. He was arrested 6 times, and languished in jail in several cities.

In 1906, he extricated himself from a 7th arrest and made his way to America. In New York, his 1st stop, the Bundist organization was his spiritual home, and when he transferred to Newark, New Jersey, he organized a Bundist organization there. Without the Bund, life was meaningless. But Levitt is a practical man. He cannot be satisfied with romantic and beautiful thoughts. Therefore he went into Branch 196 of the Arbeiter Ring and immediately was appointed protocol secretary, and with the recommendations of Arbeiter Ring as a socialist activist he came to Los Angeles in 1910.

The story of his life in Los Angeles, is the story of Jewish life in Los Angeles, which is that in the last 42 years, Los Angeles grew from a small Jewish outpost to the 2nd largest Jewish presence in America, and takes on an honorable place in all the important Jewish movements of the world, with their own wonderful institutions, in which J. Levitt played an important part. He helped build and organize and had his hand on the rudder of Jewish communal life in this city.

42 years ago, Jewish Los Angeles was a small shtetl with one branch of Arbeiter Ring, Branch 248, of blessed memory. And just as soon as he crossed the threshold of his new sundrenched home, he threw himself into the Job Harriman campaign for mayor of Los Angeles. His 1st contact with the socialist movement in California was through a slight association with the American Socialist movement. But his main interest is the Jewish movement and together with this small group in the Jewish socialist organization's office, in

1911, they brought out the 1st socialist lecturer in the person of Baruch Charney Vladeck, of blessed memory.

The City of Hope, one of the most beautiful and one of the largest medical institutions in the world, was founded as the Los Angeles Sanatorium for members of the Arbeiter Ring, branch number 248. Levitt is one of the original founders, and one of the most energetic workers on its behalf. But this is only a small part of his life. He also takes a very active part in the socialist movement, in the Jewish Socialist Federation, in all of its inner challenges. And later in the Jewish Socialist Association, in Arbeiter Ring and all of its cultural activities. In 1916, J. Levitt was the California delegate to the Arbeiter Ring: in the convention in Brownsville.

In 1919 he became associated with the "Forwards" traveling throughout the states, visiting cities and towns in all the interests of the paper, and also planting the interests of the Arbeiter Ring and the Socialist movement. Arbeiter Ring branches were established in Fresno, Stockton and other cities and towns in California. With the establishment of a "Forwards" office in Los Angeles, J. Levitt was appointed manager and correspondent. This position gave him a new opportunity to use his enthusiasm and energy to broaden his activities. The "Forwards" office under the leadership of J. Levitt became the center of gravity for the whole movement and the growing communal life of the city of Los Angeles.

The "Forwards" office became the consulting room for all the activities of the movement. All the plans to protect the Arbeiter Ring and the Jewish Socialist movement from communistic demoralization were worked out, here. With the help of the "Forwards," the home for the Jewish Socialists Association, was built, which became the nucleus for the present day, beautiful,

Vladeck Centre. Plans for Arbeiter Ring Camp, open forums and Arbeiter Ring schools etc., were worked out there.

J. Levitt uses his boundless energy to organize a workshop campaign, out of which grew "ORT." The Jewish Workers Committee was established in 1934 and for many years thereafter their home was in the offices of the "Forwards", with Levitt as its main protagonist. The office is the first stop for representatives of organizations and promoters of movements which find in J Levitt, a friendly backer. The offices of the "Forwards" are to a great extent, the home of "YIVO" in Los Angeles, where J. Levitt is the driving force for greater accomplishment.

The State of Israel found a warm friend and supporter in the Bundist, J. Levitt. Also the Histadrut found in him a supporter and activist. The Jewish Community Council found him to be an ardent activist in Jewish communal life, and all worthy institutions benefitted from him, to a greater or lesser degree, a large part of his enthusiastic energy, much more than his health permitted.

J. Levitt devoted half century for communal work. He can look at his life's work with great pride. His efforts brought great results, and although he no longer has the energy of his younger years--they were spent wisely--he is still full of enthusiasm. His work is important, and we wish him many years of health and communal activity, because only in this work does he find the pulse of his life.

J. Levitt-----Man Of The Century

H. Lang

What a blessing to a man's life, when one can say, he is a man of the century. And it is this very title that I proclaim upon our celebrant from the Los Angeles YIVO, my friend Julius Levitt.

To live in harmony with one's own generation, means to be absolutely synchronized with the events that took place in the course of time, from youth to advanced age, and this is a high achievement. Nations evaluate their children in this manner, and give high marks to those whose lives flow into every great social event. For us to assign the title "Man of the Hour" however, means much more. It means to restrain oneself from life's riches. Still, we have lived through so much.

So much upset, so many revolutions, worldly and personal, so many problems and breakups, so many economic hardships, so much political change, so much spiritual agitation, and so much social chaos.

And we were forced to absorb it and overlook it in our own spiritual fire. And the number of these "men of the century" are not so few. However, among them, there are exceptional men, like J. Levitt.

I am thinking of the 5 momentous events in our generation's life, which in them is drama, high drama, the whole tragedy of God's world. And dreams drift over them. The trauma of a generation of a people, whose grief cries to the heavens in hope that the Messiah will come. And what moments they were!

We began our lifetime--we, the youth, at the beginning of this century--with a crisis in our homes, with a revolt against that which we at that time called restraint and ghetto, and today it has an entirely different concept. We were already children of the enlightenment, and we sought ways to drive the revolution of enlightenment broader and deeper. We crossed over to socialism, and for us it had no meaning, it meant only a better life for the poor. Our poverty-stricken life played a part in this, but as for us, the issue was a new mentality and a new morale:

Socialism like a belief, with books instead of the Bible, with Marx instead of the Gomorrah, with worldly languages instead of one tongue, with outreach to all instead of withdrawing inwardly, with entrance to scientific academies instead of yeshivas, with mixing of the races and freedom instead of restraint and staying within the boundaries of your own family. The momentum to revolution drove us, and parties arose, the "Bund" with her socialism, and also Zionism into which Socialism entered. We, of those times, our youth of those days, the new spiritual and intellectual light in the cities and towns of half a continent, of Eastern Europe--in all the streets and alleys, whether in Vilna, or in Minsk, in Warsaw or in Lublin, a new generation of Jewish children where to be seen. And in the old streets of Disna and in the old town of Vilna, there was a youngster, Yudel Levitt, to whom this new atmosphere belonged, and he became a part of it.

With these new events, which at that time enveloped us, and with the joy of youth, which were found therein, came fear. At the same time that we left our homes and families, looking outward for more enlightenment, our neighbors, the Gentiles, the Slavs, Russians and Ukrainians and Poles attacked us with whips and axes; Jewish homes shook under the pogroms. Like courageous children, we very quickly occupied ourselves with self-protection. And like young thinking individuals, we began to form resistance groups. And with new vigor we embraced our new creations, new Torah, new literature. But certain impulses were driving us in new directions, and the 2nd great event of our generation began to unfold. The American immigration which brought upheaval to the whole Jewish existence, literally interrupted all Jewish fundamentals. And somewhere in these vagabond streams, this same youngster, Yudel Levitt, from the streets and alleys of Disna and Vilna,

joined in the swim. He swam out and drank in the great psychological mystery which the American immigration held forth: the great longing for what had been left behind in the old world, and with head held high and brave of heart he ventured forth, to the new Earth and the new heavens.

In the American immigration officers there is a chapter on the "Forwards". And right by its side there is a chapter on Arbeiter Ring. And in the vicinity, there is the story of the unions. And through them, one can recognize the beginnings of the story of American Jewry, and they are separated by class. They branch out into all sections of the new world and into all the different institutions and move into aid programs, cultural as well as financial aid, with the mantle of American freedoms from one end of America to the other, whose boundaries are washed on either side by the 2 oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific. Yudel Levitt, from Disna, establishes himself in California **while** serving both the "Forwards" and Arbeiter Ring; and he begins to gather, those of his generation, that scratched out a meager living, from the streets and alleys and among the cemeteries of Lithuania or the Ukraine or Poland, to the Sierras of California, and to the valleys.

They crossed over the seas, in the same way, carrying the same baggage, sacks laden with poverty, but also full of ideas and ideals, and in California, a new belief begins, to which Levitt becomes a believer. It's prayer book is socialistic, and all that is holy in it, is brand-new, and it makes holy the new Jewish life. And a new Jewish people springs forth all across America; actually a people with that magical dynamic of America. Freedom becomes the strength for Jewish progress, and this progress is pure and strong from all points of this great land, whether in California, or in New York, in all sections of

America, a new Jewish people begins a mysterious awakening in the story that is America.

However, here come the wars, these two bitter death dealing world wars. And our people across the seas suffer in hunger, in fire and in blood directed at them. And the heavens have come down upon us with all their fury, send down all manner all of catastrophe, that the devil himself can devise. We are driven, in this manner to the third great moment in the story of our generation, great in darkness and suffering; physically beaten, and our human dignity trampled; turned into dust by communism, and burned in the hellish fires of Nazism; and in 2 pots, tastefully, the world cooked our meal. The taste of horror, and that we should see ourselves as fooled from all our ideals of our generation. It's smothered us and strangled us and ate our hearts even here in the freedom of America, and we fought tooth and nail with the world in the struggle for our lives. And we formed new movements, and we fortified them, so that they should be a new weapon for our survival. And what the other of our contemporaries did elsewhere, the Californian did here--we lived with it, we suffered, we sobbed and cried with all the winds and fires.

And so to the next great moment, the moment of deliverance, the struggle with the whole world for Israel and final redemption, after 2000 years of political orphanage, a renewal of nationhood in Jewish history, which was brought forth by all contemporaries, even those that stood like the historical and spiritual Judges of old, more wedded to the idea rather than the practicality, but basically, to the existence of our people through spirituality.

We endured so much, and all of us became gray, also our "man of the hour", from Disna, standing among us with a silvery



head; but as with all of us, he stands, finally, at the fifth great moments, and we see them here, in all his uniqueness. Here he shows his own individuality, his own form, his personality.

This 5th moment complements all the others. He is the sum of it all, our generation's bottom line, and a cheerful one at that. This moment breathes of productivity. It is the time in which American Jewry comes into its own, occupies itself with building the Jewish house, it should be well integrated into the American reality, conforming with Jewish tradition, exactly so with all avenues of the American scene. Every city, every community, developing their institutions, increasing the number of temples and centers, rooted in charities, organizing hospitals, building Jewish civilization and culture, from Talmud Torahs to colleges. And the aim overall is not to be an island in a forbidding sea, but to be as one with the neighborhood as well as with the up and coming Jewish land in the hills and valleys, where once walked the first Jewish Tribes. We have our syntheses, and America understands us, so we build our Jewish civilization and culture in all American byways; and in Los Angeles it is accomplished in its own fashion; and in this we see the hand of Julius Levitt, in the role of "city father", exactly as we saw him "man of his times". He stands as a founder of a settlement.

Should one hear of an institution, he knows her story from the beginning. And not from just hearsay, but through a measure of input during her planning and the laying of her foundation. And in the roster of people in his personal records, there are the names of rabbis as well as socialists, doctors who are doers in the Arbeiter Ring, businessmen as well as unionists, lawyers as well as laborers. They stand from the "beginnings" to the "maturation", with their arrival to the sunny warmth of Southern California, with their status and their achievements,

who among them climb to the very top of the ladder, to great wealth. And when he meets people in the fields of communal work, then there comes into play the strains of his socialistic origin:

They are the nouveau riche, and he remains the working man, with the worries of the working class, to awaken in them sentiments to do more, give more, for the needy.

Is this a great historical mission in the city of Los Angeles, which to her truly endless spread of city limits, there begins now a truly unending Jewish center--and this is the reward for the Disner and Vilner and Los Angeleno "Man of His Generation".

**We send our heartfelt greetings to our dear friend,**

**J. Levitt**

To sum up a final tally of his 50 years of communal activity, he may certainly be proud of the results. His pioneering works for the good of our movement, is varied and colorful activity for the decades that he has been in Los Angeles, have certainly aided in the establishment, the growth and the development in everything that the Arbeiter Ring and our movement in this Jewish life in general have stood for in Los Angeles.

We wish him and his family many more years of good health and good fortune. May he continue to serve the Arbeiter Ring in all areas of our movement and may he experience success and achievement in all that our organization and our movement stands for.

## **National Executive Committee of Arbeiter Ring**

L. Arkin, president.  
Y. Eberil, vice president.  
Y. Weinberg, treasurer  
Y. Baskin, secretary  
B. Gebiner, executive general secretary  
N. Chanin, building director  
V. Stern, director of youth activity

## **The Communal Man and The Community At Large**

A few words regarding the 50th anniversary of community work of

**Yudel Levitt**

By H. Rosenblatt

What is the essence and the meaning of communal works in connection with communal matters?—basically—a naïve question. What do you mean, what good does a community activist achieve for the good of the people? It is perfectly clear, like the nose on your face, it cannot be otherwise...in him lives a creative spirit that drives him and pushes him to creative communal endeavors. There is in him, so to say, a magician, an author, a painter, a sculptor, a scientist, a researcher etc. He seeks to better and uplift the communal life around him---for the good of himself and his fellow man. He seeks to be the glue that will cement the past generations with the future---in order to accomplish this, he must first possess creative talent. in addition to that talent--and this is of course is understandable--vision, impulsiveness, and willingness, his own good fortune, and even a portion of his new life. Why--the man of good judgment, the honest communal worker is rarely willing to shorten his life---he must try to ignore the caprice of the world around him. He must take a vow to experience without complaint hard times; to hold back the evil impulse, when he stands in conflict with the decisions of his coworkers not to lose balance---who is strong enough to withhold the evil spirit-- unable to break old habits. Understandably, all this comes under the heading of the level of his functions, in regard to his communal functions. The revolutionary, for example, is even ready to sacrifice his own life, for his class, for his people, or for humanity, or the scientist as he experiments with borrowed, secret, natural elements in regard to his ambitions and aims...

Communal work has, in the last few years, become a serious profession, almost an art, to which the communal worker must prepare, study through a university degree, pass examinations in order to be useful and successful in his chosen work. And, after all of that, you must possess inborn and innate talent.

That is the essence of it all. What is the point of communal work? Why has one been blessed (or cursed) with the ability to be a communal worker, and another, not? Where is the reward, the satisfaction, the compensation, for him? To these questions the world has a number of answers.

Here are some of them:

(a) The communal worker, same as an artist, is beyond reward!

(b) He is beyond seeking personal aggrandizement over his co-workers.

(c) He seeks, through his good deeds, to get his "reward in heaven".

(d) This is for him, a sort of inner satisfaction.

(e) His aim, through his good works, is to acquire his immortality---and there are many other egotistic objectives that a serious communal worker has in mind. In all of these numerous objectives, there lays just a particle of truth. And in spite of it all, every "particle" of truth, is for this individual not only a curse, but on the contrary, a God's blessing for him, as well as for the community, in which he, as well as ourselves, live and work.

Without these enumerated objectives, this man would become a sticky thorn, and the world around him--a barren desert. All of these characteristics--however we describe them--are actually the blessed stimuli, impulses, illusions that stimulate the communal worker to his deeds;--deeds that reform and improve the communal life we live in.

Regarding the issue of "immortality", it is worthwhile, at this opportunity, to express a few thoughts, briefly. Mankind has

squandered volumes of words, spilt oceans of ink and tears, and to this very day, this aforementioned issue remains an unending source of honey and gall.... oftentimes we are bound to hear these very pessimistic philosophies: "life is so short, and death so fortuitous, and tragic." The clamor: "vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" has already been confirmed, so many times and has been accepted in the pessimistic philosophies as the sworn truth.... so--to what end does man hustle and bustle? What kind of personal, self interesting, reward does he get for his creative works?" "I die, and the world dies with me", has become a deeply ingrained motto. How often have we already heard the refrain from the "charity box", as the human corpse is being accompanied to his final resting place:-- "charity will save you from death", like some kind of irony, mocking death. And yet, we deny death, as though it was just an empty dream, a made-up thought, and we are constantly pursuing the shadow of immortality. On the face of it, it is actually the illusion of infinity that is no more than the tragic truth--death. Therefore we can see how the artist weaves his dreams and dreams them into his work--monuments, that live on after him, as a legacy for future generations we see, by this treasure, whether he lived a good life with a gentle heart--leaves after him, like a monument, souvenirs in the form of charity, institutions, or--funds with which to finance universities; or--funds, scholarships for studying youth; the means to help and encourage creative artists--literature prizes. Every thinking person is looking for a way to perpetuate his life--in immortality! The objects of artists, as with all people, with a good heart, are naturally the same. Eternity, immortality. This lies in the conscience of most people. So it is a sin, on the part of his co-workers, to read malice into his objectives,--even though there is a glimmer of **arrogance** shining forth. These are the very human weaknesses that in the end, is the driving power, that drives

him to creativity, leads him on to the right path.... we must forget; forget and forgive this human weakness in order to reach favorable accomplishments, and to bless him for the good deeds that live after him.

Sunday afternoon, 16 March, friends, close friends will come together at the Ambassador Hotel, in order to congratulate, pay homage, to gladden the heart of our---comrade Yudel Levitt who has well spent half century of communal activity. It is all of our delight to stretch out a warm, friendly and, and to wish him many more years. May his future years bring to him and his devoted partner in life and all his family, much luck and happiness, as well as it is work for a better and more beautiful world. And I--as chairman of the local YIVO committee--in the name of the local YIVO committee as well as personally, wish our dear friend, Yudel Levitt, that in the coming years that we are destined to tread God's Earth, may we work together in harmony as we have in the past. It was good, despite our different political ideologies, and often our different opinions, to work with you.

With love and friendship, your  
H. Rosenblatt

## **Communal Veteran**

**Y. Lisson---Oakland, California**

It is hard to believe, that more than 25 years have passed, since I became acquainted with friend Yudel Levitt. It was at our very first meeting, that he made on all of us, an awakening impression. A serious and proud look, tall of stature. His

dynamic energy and desire to achieve, awakened in all of us, positive effects.

Levitt possesses a great deal of burning energy. I would say, that he belongs to that very few examples of people, that are blessed with constant momentum and readiness to do something and accomplish something. But more--Levitt in the area of energy and desire, is exceptional even among that few examples of people. I say exceptional, because among those very few, there sometimes are those whose bark is greater than their bite. Levitt however, is, to begin with, kneaded from different dough. I would label him, in the business of creativity.

We are familiar with many communal issues, organizations and institutions, where Levitt, with his momentous energy and earnestness--has fired up the willingness and eagerness of those around him, who, left alone, would never have accomplished the volume of work and achievement which was done under the tutelage of Levitt.

It is not often that we notice in our communal life, leaders who achieve results in very important matters. This very type however, becomes in the process of his work and especially when he begins to climb the ladder of success---he becomes enthralled and envelops himself, unknowingly, with different complexes of arrogance and fame. There is almost no end to his hunger for acceptance and recognition. To gather with this aforementioned state of fervor--there grows within him gradual self assurance, that he is always right, he is always clever, he **is** always logical and always practical. He begins to judge everybody by his standards. His standards are: if you are great with me--it's good. If someone, God forbid, does not agree with him, he's wrong. I don't mean to say that Levitt is absolutely free of these temptations. No! This type of



communal worker is perhaps not even available, these types that are protected and immune from all this. I speak here only of that level of character. Levitt is blessed with that very seriousness of character that does not permit this negative trait to devour him. And the reason for this is, that Levitt is throughout, honest.

Levitt is also capricious, as is every activist in society. On occasion, I have witnessed him in this very situation, when he becomes stubborn and **it is** not easy to change his mind. I must however underline, that's seldom, I might also say never, has that happened for cheap politics. I am not here to defend him, and to say that he is always right. I merely wish to state, that if he is not always right--he is always honest and sincere. And I must say, that this is rare indeed among community workers .

I first met Levitt in close contact at work, in Los Angeles as well as in Oakland, and in other cities. I saw him in good moods, in pleasant activity, and on the other hand, in stormy meetings. On many occasions, I thought that he was wrong, both in his interpretation and in his handling of a situation. But I always respected him fully, because I always felt, that he was forthright and did not engage in petty politics, as in other cases.

For my wife and I, Levitt is not only a community activist, but also a very close friend, a family friend. Whenever my wife and I visited Los Angeles, or he in Oakland, we always visited.

My wife and I send you and all of your family, dear friend Levitt, our heartfelt blessings, and we wish you many more years of good health and productivity, fruitful work for the good of the Jewish community.

# **My Brother Followed Me**

**Isidore Levitt**

Actually, Yudel went his own way, and now that we are celebrating 50 years of his way of life, I can testify that he did not travel the byways or live on the edge, but ever forward and onward. And his footprints left deep and significant marks, but geographically, he followed me.

I was the first to leave my place of birth, Disna, and go to Vilna, where Yudel later joined me. I was the first to go to America, and I later brought him out, when things got a little too hot for him in the old country. And later, Yudel followed me to Los Angeles.

An interesting incident comes to mind. Yudel was a Bundist, and not in name only. And for his activity in the Bund he frequently was granted free lodging in the Vilna jails. Once, just before the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, knowing full well that Yudel, who is tall of stature, would be among the the first to be arrested by the Czarist bloodhounds{they knew him quite well} the movement arranged for him to leave Vilna until after Mayday.

At that time I was a soldier in the Imperial Czarist Russian Army. I was stationed in Kovno as a writer in the administrative offices. Yudel figured that the best place to hide himself would be with me in my barracks. And I remember, as though it were yesterday, that a soldier, actually, a Jew, bragged to me, within earshot of Yudel, how he was going to be the first to beat up those lousy Socialists who were trying to overthrow the Czar.

I can tell you many more tales, important ones and some not so important that would portray Yudel's character both in the socialistic movement as well as in Jewish communal work, works that exceeded his physical stature. And I can only say that these honors that are being paid to him today, were earned Kasher, and not sought after. I wish him long years and may he always go in his own way.

## **Yudel Levitt's Anniversary Celebration Is A Societal Holiday**

Fifty years of communal activity from Yudel Levitt, manager of the Los Angeles office of the "Forwards", is more than just a holiday for an individual. And more than a holiday for one or another community institution in which the celebrant is

especially interested and is active therein. It is a communal holiday for the Jewish people of Los Angeles.

Of the 50 years that Y. Levitt devoted to community activities, 42 of those years he lived and worked in Los Angeles. In those 42 years, the Jewish community in Los Angeles grew from a small insignificant cluster of homes to the 2nd largest Jewish community in the United States, with a vigorous and productive community program, with large and well known institutions, such as the "City of Hope", Mount Sinai Hospital and Clinic, which serves free, thousands of patients monthly, and simultaneously building one of the largest hospitals on the west side, and other large projects.

We are well acquainted with the public opinion in the process of building and maintaining these and other institutions that are dependent on the interest that they draw from different organizations, landsmanschaften, unions, clubs and individuals, and the controversy involved in their support, and not only has Mr. Levitt held together, these many years, the information in the "Forwards", and the publicity, but he also took a personal interest in these matters. The success of many of these institutions is due, in no small measure, thanks to the personal interest of our celebrant and the "Forwards" which he represents.

This can be said not only about these important institutions, but also about the broad spectrum of communal life in this city. However we are especially interested in Mount Sinai, and here more than anywhere else we can appraise Y. Levitt's value to this institution.

The management and the Board of Directors of Mount Sinai Hospital and clinic, join in celebrating 50 years of communal

activity of Y. Levitt, and wish him many years of good health and good work for all these worthy institutions. And Mount Sinai is certainly a worthy institution to which we hope you will give your support for many years to come.

Samuel Penzick, President

Max E. Mark, Executive Director

## **Our Yudel Levitt**

**B. Surasky**

Chairman Of Local 97 and Vice-chairman of the Cloakmakers  
Joint Board

We are celebrating the 50th anniversary of a good comrade and a heartfelt friend. A celebration of about 15 years of community activity of our dear friend Y. Levitt.... I take it, that many different evaluations will be given regarding the work of our friend Y. Levitt. He was active in several different areas of endeavor. His life is colorful. I am very interested in one particular area of endeavor in which Y. Levitt excelled. This is in the Jewish labor movement specifically, and in the movement generally. This field however, requires a more careful evaluation, because Levitt dedicated the greatest part of his life in devoted service to the Jewish labor movement. Let me be brief.

I had the good fortune to meet our celebrant in the year 1926 in Los Angeles. Throughout the years, and until the present, I have observed Levitt's activity in the field of the labor movement. I saw how he displayed a deep interest in every challenge and conflict that the labor movement experienced. He served the ideals and the principles of the labor movement with his whole being, day in and day out, he stood at his post, as a teacher, motivating the Jewish worker striving for a better and more humane life.

Levitt, one of the folks, always highlighted the life and challenges of the Jewish worker. Levitt, as a representative of a Jewish worker's newspaper, always kept the door to his office wide open to the Jewish working people. With his warm and friendly personality, he filled the hearts of every Jewish worker with warm brotherly love. They found in Levitt a true friend, that had entered the working class movement. Levitt, with his words and his pen helped form the present day mighty Jewish workers movement. With his words and his pen he called upon the Jewish workers to organize in strong unions which are today, the fortress and protection of their life's interest.

Levitt's dedication to his work, will be inscribed in golden letters, to the story of the labor movement. He enriched the struggles and goals consciousness of the Jewish worker. For this reason, the Jewish worker is here today in spirit, at this celebration. Who does not remember the bitter strikes of the cloak makers and the Amalgamated workers union in Los Angeles. And also in the smaller unions Levitt, as a true friend, dedicated all of his energies to uphold **the spirit** of challenge of the worker.

You,, dear celebrant, as one of the teachers in the Jewish workers movement, we send you our blessings. May you have many spiritual strengths and physical prowess in order to further pursue your life's activity for the workers movement, for a more beautiful, humane and beautiful future.

May this blessing, dear celebrant, be fully realized in your lifetime.

### **A Few Words From A Friend**

I wish to greet my friend Yudel Levitt with a few words, on his anniversary of 50 years of communal activity, 42 of those years here in this city, activities that are tied into the workers

movement as well as communal institutions and YIVO. I am happy to have this opportunity, along with other YIVO members, to celebrate this holiday.

As a personal friend of his, I have always regarded our celebrant as a leader in the workers movement, a man of the people and friend to all in Jewish circles. His work is recognized in all branches, groups and organizations.

I cannot take pride in the fact that I have known our celebrant for many years. I first became acquainted with friend Yudel Levitt, 13 years ago, in the office of the "Forwards" sitting at his typewriter, doing very important work for the Jewish community here in Los Angeles. His serious attention to communal affairs, his logic, his willingness to do his share and perhaps even more than his share, brought out in me a desire to know him better, and this acquaintanceship to grow into friendship.

These 13 years haven't been the most catastrophic for Jewish communities in Europe. All of us bore witness to the annihilation of the Jews, but also to that awesome moment of the birth of the state of Israel. Throughout these times I have had the opportunity to be in contact with Y. Levitt and found him to be a true Socialist, a fighter for justice and freedom, a fighter for the future of the people of Israel, and a friend of the worker's movement in the state of Israel.

I am personally grateful to the YIVO committee of Los Angeles for sponsoring the celebration these 50 years of community activity of Y. Levitt. I value the worthiness of YIVO in Jewish life. The rescue and bringing over of the Vilna YIVO library and archives that the Nazis robbed and tried to destroy, is one of the greatest events in Jewish culture, and in my greetings today



to our celebrant, I wish to emphasize Y. Levitt's work for YIVO and wish him many years of good health and activity.

**Lester Lipman Weinstock**

### **Greetings From The Office Staff To The Manager On This, His Anniversary**

We, the office staff, consider ourselves as "belonging" at this celebration of 50 years of communal activity of Yudel Levitt, manager of the Los Angeles office of the "Forwards". And we bear witness to the fact that this celebration is worthy in every respect, and that the recognition that Y. Levitt is receiving for

50 years of hard work in every aspect of communal life, has been well earned.

We, who are with him in the office constantly, who see him at work daily, bear witness to the serious attention that he gives to community movements and institutions. His worries for their success and his efforts to assure their success. He utilizes the "Forwards" to serve that movement or institution to which he has a personal attachment, as though it were his project and he puts in his earnest efforts for the progress of Jewish life.

Time means nothing to him. He could have several meetings during the day, and have lunch during a meeting, and have more meetings in the evening. And with Mr. Levitt, a meeting does not consist of him just being present. He is completely absorbed in the work going on, and he demands the same interest from others, and when he is considered too demanding, there are grudges, which he dislikes, but he doesn't pay too much attention to them. So we take another pill. Obey the doctor? Forget it.

And with it all, the worthiness of his work is a foregone conclusion, his service to the growing Jewish community is recognized. Even if not always or often given. And today as his well earned recognition is openly expressed, we join in this general celebration of Y. Levitt's anniversary, and perhaps more so than others, because we see him at work daily.

We would advise him that it is time that he take his doctor's advice, and take it a bit more easy, a few less conferences and in general pay more attention to yourself, but we know that he will take our advice as little as he does the doctors'. So we wish him many years of good health and success in his work for the good of the people.

**Malka Horelick  
Meyer Weintraub  
Joseph Tilles  
Boris Deskoff**

### **Lest We Forget**

At the age of 74, the well-known community and cultural activist---Naftoli Peretz Kahn---better known as Peter M. Kahn, was torn away from among the living.

With the death of Peter M. Kahn, the Jewish community in America, and especially here in Los Angeles lost a very **dear** personality, a devoted, energetic and righteous Jew, who was

loved by all sections of the local community life. Kahn had a great influence in the achievements of the local Jewish community and especially in the education of the Jewish progressive schools.

Until the very last hour of his colorful life, he was a demanding, effectual activist in a number of Jewish people's organizations.

Kahn, with successive interest, read the Jewish literature in both languages: Jewish and Hebrew. He had his finger on the pulse of Jewish life, here as well as in Israel. His words were listened to with great respect, because he was honest, truthful and straightforward.

Without him, the Jewish community here in Los Angeles feels it has been orphaned, due to the fact that we have lost a very personable and effectual emissary, these were the interests and ideals that Kahn represented.

With bowed heads we mourn our loss.

Honor to his memory.

## **The Mission of The Yiddish Institute of Visenschaft (knowledge)----YIVO**

### **Eliezer Dorin**

To define or declare the functions of the Jewish Visenschaftlecher [scholarly] Institute is not as simple as some may think.

Let me just try to make a few remarks concerning this.

The fundamental work of YIVO is basically two pronged: for the scientist, the researcher, the professional--it is a place, where one can come and study and do research. YIVO is actually the only Jewish institution in the whole world, which is concerned with the research of Yiddish, Yiddish literature and Yiddish publications. I mention here only these three areas of research, because for research in other disciplines such as-- Jewish folklore and research in the Jewish way of life---there-- are other institutions, true enough, not in English but in English or in other languages. For the broad spectrum of people, it is an institution that disseminates educational and exhaustive and specific information in the area of research authenticity.

Both the spread of education, and providing specific information--are very complicated problems. Aside from these facts, that education is both very interesting as well as useful, the general public is not really very eager to embrace it and take advantage of it. The overwhelming percentage of people in the whole world and in all the nations---there is a lack of appetite for education and self-improvement. There is a lack I would say of that yearning and gnawing hunger, that leads to achievement. And in the same way that a lack of food, physical hunger is a clear sign of illness, that the person is not well and sometimes very ill, exactly in the same way, a lack of intellectual hunger--and similarly, there is an indication that the person is not spiritually strong and often actually dangerously sick. In the matter of hunger for learning, there is another problem. And that is that seldom, and perhaps never, will someone complain to you that he lacks spiritual appetite.

It is therefore one of the weightiest and one of the most serious problems for YIVO--to utilize every opportunity and

call upon every method, pedagogic as well as practical---to disseminate education for the general public and especially for the intellectual public.

That which pertains to the issue of accurate information, accurate and objective for pure research, is a problem of exceptional importance and of colossal significance, and here is the reason for it:

A historian, or a literature historian, with a calling for scholarly research--but without a historical philosophy is in fact only in the category of a collector of data of known events. Such a researcher is in no way a historian in the full and modern sense of the word, and even less, a researcher in literature. The great, truly recognized historian with an academic calling--must also, ultimately, possess a historical philosophy or a literary philosophy. Such a historian takes stock of himself, and asks, what influence does historical scholarship and historical self-identification have on the life of people.

Regarding the great historian Simon Dubnow, of blessed memory, Dr. Philip Friedman writes the following:--

Dubnow's greatness as a historian lies not only due to the fact that he is a great specialist and expert in scholarly origins; but also in the fact that he researched quite a few problems that were hardly studied,(Jewish autonomy, messianic movements, Hasidism etc.), that he introduced to the Eastern European Jews with all of their unique and rich culture, in the modern Jewish historiography. No matter how important these individual accomplishments were--Dubnow's single most

important accomplishment was The New Philosophy of the Jewish History and his History of Jewish Autonomism.

Here, however, a negative, tempting moment appears. Because hardly do we set foot on the platform of a designated, well formed, ideological, historical philosophy--then we already have a well formed, concrete designated world conception. In this case we already see all the historical processes and their accompanying motives--only in the light of this firm and accepted philosophical doctrine--and we already cannot, or are incapable, or we overlook all other philosophical and historical truths and messages. And here we must clearly underline throughout, wherever possible, because often it can happen and does, that one of those other unnoticed or overlooked philosophical doctrines--is the most important junction--where events come together historically, or conversely they are tied together historically.

The bottom line is: objective research: and here let us be matter of fact and not get lost in empty, foolish, hopes and beliefs. Let us clearly underline,: objective research is understandably not found the world over, I am referring here, to the Jewish world outside the framework of this Jewish scientific Institute. And if you really want to know the reason for this, the answer is simple, YIVO takes no part in any kind of activity of a political character. YIVO picks, gathers, sorts, researches and disseminates material without fanfare and without propaganda. The logical motive being, pure research: in the same way that the sick condition of the individual is egocentric, the condition of the collective becomes ethnocentric. It is therefore positively not to evaluate the research achievements of YIVO with regard to controlling false information or incorrect facts and with regard to spreading truth an understanding about Jews, Jewish literature, Jewish

way of life and Jewish history. Now YIVO is concentrating its efforts to increase its archives and in building up her library. And it can certainly be proud of its achievements in these matters. At the present, YIVO possesses the richest Jewish archive in America and perhaps even in the whole world. And as for her library, it has one of the greatest treasures of Jewish books in the world. YIVO has prepared books, archive material and many of the most important Jewish periodicals--in order to serve Jewish students, the researcher and the scholar. No matter who it is that comes to do research, YIVO will provide all necessary materials.

YIVO considers Jewish culture as a life force. The work of YIVO is to offer the possibility to every Jew to better understand. It enriches him with new tools in his struggle for his spiritual existence. Also for the life of Jews in general--the work of YIVO is very important. Through the scientific research then it does in every department, it is sometimes possible to see a small sign on the cement, that binds one generation to the next, and in reverse to get a few of the reasons which separate the generations. Through his objective manner of research he is often able to get to the bottom of things and to get a glimpse of the genuine cement that binds one folk to another.

YIVO is not a local institution. All collections of all the cultural treasures, all scholarly researches and all of its publications--serve the dignity over the whole Jewish population--throughout the whole world. This very concrete and fundamental fact --benefits every cultural Jew and loads him with responsibility, the worldwide--to be concerned with the existence, development and broadening of YIVO--in order for him to attain his highest aims.



Every plan or action, related to either economic or social problems, must, in these days of development be built on information. Again, information today comes only through research. We must have social research, in order to know precisely the scope of our tragic losses of the recent past: we must be able to evaluate our strengths realistically in order for us to be able to organize our general lifestyle according to a healthy plan. YIVO's program and its scholarly research and her practical publications--are an advantage of the highest order for the whole Jewish population the world over.

It is with deep regret, that I must inform you that these designated programs all of YIVO, seldom go all the way to their designated conclusions. The reason for this it is very simple: the Jewish community in America--the strongest and most important material force--has up to this time, not risen to the task to undertake the ideological responsibility of the mission of YIVO for the Jewish people. We spend millions to inform the Gentile world of our Jewish accomplishments. Lack of dearth of shortage this efficiency. There is however, a shortage of money, money that is terribly necessary, that Jews should know: who they are, and what they have accomplished, and what there is yet to be done both culturally and scientifically.

The Jewish community in America--and that includes 325,000 population here in Los Angeles, may their numbers increase--needs to come up with an answer to this historic, demanding and drilling question. Why can we allow ourselves all sorts of luxuries in our private life, and why is our spiritual appetite so miserly, so puny. At the present time, there are 7 or 8 fundamental projects that the scientific college has worked out in all its details--and the only thing, holding them up--is financing. Jewish patrons go ahead and spread hundreds of thousands of dollars on cultural institutions--but absolutely

not for Jewish cultural institutions. Jewish history is waiting impatiently for this aforementioned question to be answered, to be settled.

YIVO, I would say, is the symbol of Jewish survival and continuation. A great and historic responsibility, to sustain the existence of Jewish scholarship and research, rests upon American Jewry. No matter how necessary and useful YIVO is, it cannot survive on the merits of its ancestors alone. YIVO grew over a span of 26 years--through the merits of its recognition and the enthusiasm of its supporters. Let us remember with our deepest and most tragic sorrow--the creative efforts of our brethren in Lithuania, Poland, Russia--now long gone. We must make certain, due to the change in circumstance, the center of YIVO remains in America . We can no longer do as we did formerly, and that is to transfer our responsibilities and work load on others, for them to take care of matters without us. We Jews in America must now take these responsibilities upon ourselves to provide the necessities for the existence and growth of YIVO.

## **The School And The School Activist**

**David Bridger, Bureau Of Jewish Education**  
(in honor of our celebrant, our friend, Julius Levitt)

At this happy occasion of an anniversary for a Jewish community activist, it is indeed appropriate to pause a moment, and deal with the close association between the Jewish school and school activist.

For those who are involved in the Jewish school situation worldwide, the pioneer role of the Jewish school activist in the establishment, maintenance and spiritual input into these schools, is well known. There is no doubt, that thanks to the dedication and the creative energy of the Jewish public, and thanks to the belief in the worthiness and the importance of the Jewish language and culture and for the honor and the existence of the Jewish people; the Jewish culture activist was instrumental in the development and formation of the new and progressive school movement.

At this opportunity, it is important, however, to underline, that exactly in the same way that the school activist created and supported the Jewish school, in the same way, the Jewish school developed and created the Jewish culture-and-school-activist. It is a psychological truth that's what an individual does in his personal as well as communal life, he does it in such measure and with such spirituality and scope, that is directly proportional to the scope that he gains in personal satisfaction. It is invalid to say that the pure altruistic "doing for others" or, "doing for the community" brings satisfaction. The activist is driven to work, struggle and strive for those things and ideas that enrich and satisfy his own personality and his own communal ambitions, aims and strivings.

To depart this concept, one wishes to argue that the Jewish school was initially a "minor House of Worship" a cultural center for the progressive Jewish masses. In this Jewish school hundreds of school activists throughout the land were able to get, if not a formal then certainly an informal education. Between the four walls of this man-made culture center surrounding the Jewish school, the activist heard lectures on Jewish literature, cultural issues, and questions concerning the

community. There one socialized, met and enjoyed oneself, and often, even celebrated family parties.

The fact that school activists were required to knock on doors of Jewish parents, in order to solicit for students, as well as collect tuition fees this offered them the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the life, the thoughts and the feelings of the common Jewish people especially with their educational and communal problems. Through “meeting the folks”, the activists were able to enrich their own world of knowledge and understanding, and were able to create for themselves a concept of how to serve the masses in a constructive and dynamic way. The sincere activists, through this close contact with the Jewish masses were able to see that even the most beautiful and uplifting ideals cannot and must not remain static and frozen, and it is often necessary to adjust the accepted beliefs, concepts and ideals to the existing, always dynamic life conditions. The Jewish school activist was able, under these conditions to transform his own creation--the Jewish progressive school, from a crowded, purely partisan school, which must teach a particular “ism”--in a truly national communal education-institution.

Through the Jewish school, that was initially built not only on the basis of Judaism, but also on the basis of communal equity, the Jewish person that became a school activist, was given the opportunity to assimilate and to digest that deep sense of social justice, and was able to become a knowledgeable worker not only for Jewish education, and Jewish survival in general, but also for the dignified and ethical survival of humanity.

The Jewish school in the main, gave the Jewish culture activist that very important feeling of being a useful and creative member of the community. The school gave to the activist the

belief in his own abilities, his ability to create, his experience and knowledge. When the current, perhaps already graying cultural-activist, looks back at his past experiences, he must surely be overcome by a feeling all of worth and pride, that with his energy and sense of responsibility and understanding, he helped to create the beautiful institution of the Jewish progressive school, in addition to scores of other communal institutions. Whether he recruited students for the school or he sold tickets, already arranged banquets, or lectured, when necessary--or in whatever capacity he was able to make himself useful, according to his talents, he is left with a healthy feeling of his own worthiness and creativity, a feeling that is very necessary for every normal individual.

Our esteemed celebrant, Julius Levitt, who throughout his years, has been associated with Jewish educational affairs and in general Jewish communal life, and who is currently a member of the local Bureau of Jewish Education, received, in great degree his Jewish communal seniority, thanks to his close contact with the Jewish progressive school. And he, we feel, goes now, in spite of being in his "sixties", with his head held high, and with a feeling of esteem and being a creative industrious builder of man. May he continue to have this uplifting feeling for many years to come, and may they inspire him to many more beautiful deeds in the field of Jewish culture and communal work.

## **Levitt, The Pioneer**

We, of the Arbeiter Ring in Los Angeles, are, as a matter of fact, the main celebrants at this celebration of the 50th anniversary of Y. Levitt's communal activity. Because for 42 of those 50 years he occupied himself with communal work in Los Angeles. 42 years of building the Arbeiter Ring, which actually means, building the Jewish labor movement in the people's organizations.

42 years ago, there was practically nothing here in Los Angeles. But thanks to his efforts, and also to his devotion to everything that we hold dear, he made it possible to establish Jewish Los Angeles to the level where it stands today, and the high prestige that it occupies in Jewish life in America. Friend Levitt was one of a small number of our activists that built a

bridge between our people and the so-called elite sections of the German Jews of those days, and with that made possible that one should recognize the other, and in that way brought union in the Los Angeles Jewish life.

Friend Levitt was the only one who activated our work throughout the state of California. Traveling as representative of the "Forwards" in towns and cities of California, he searched for areas in which to establish Arbeiter Ring branches and helped to cement their work through annual state conferences which has lasted for the past 33 years.

It is impossible to account for all the services performed by our celebrant in a short greeting article. One can fill a book. Especially the role played by Y. Levitt in the life of our whole movement, as the representative of the Los Angeles office of the "Forwards". On a day by day basis he advertised our work among the great masses of Jewish readers. He propagandized our ideals through the pages of the "Forwards".

Therefore now, that YIVO, that esteemed organization, celebrates the 50th anniversary of communal activity by our esteemed celebrant, our own Yudel Levitt, we come here now in the name of the Southern California district committee of Arbeiter Ring and in the name of the 26 branches in the district, and the over 3000 families of the Arbeiter Ring membership, we join in the blessings of all, and wish our celebrant and his devoted life's partner, Minnie, many more years of life and good fortune.

**Southern California district Committee Of Arbeiter Ring**

Sesh Ashri, Chairman

Joshua Farber, Secretary

## **Soul Searching In Our Current activities**

**Y. Friedland**

Our esteemed editor H. Rosenblatt invited me to write an article in the journal to honor the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of communal work of our friend J. Levitt. Certainly there is much to say regarding one who worked a whole half century in communal work, and who can therefore be an important witness to so many changes in our communal organism. And certainly much will be said about our celebrant regarding his communal work; and to all the good wishes for his good works, I wish to add my own blessings. However, I do believe, that at an anniversary such as this, it would not be inappropriate to engage in some soul searching regarding an issue that has bothered many, if not all, communal and cultural activists. I will, therefore, attempt to pose a problem which rarely is



deleted from our daily agenda in our Jewish journalism. It is the age-old question "Jewish culture and education", "national existence" and the issue of all issues " what is the future of our Jewish youth?"—the inheritors of our Jewish culture.

Our monthly journal "Future" [Tsukunft] has, for the last few years, conducted a symposium regarding this very issue, and this month it opens a new symposium, "Is America the Diaspora?" What in the final analysis will happen on these rocky roads?

With the advent of the State of Israel, these questions have become more timely. On the one side we see that the spirit and the attitude to Jewish spirituality among American Jews and youth have had a rapprochement; but on the other side however, we see that the Jewish language and Jewish culture, as we understand it, have moved farther away than before. And perhaps this is not to be wondered at, since a great number of our Jewish organizations are using the English and taking the path of least resistance.

At the present time, we feel strongly, that our youth is far removed from us, and are like strangers; and are going completely in their own way. The efforts of the school and cultural organizations to include our youth, in the ways of our Jewish thinking and ideals, are the result, unfortunately, of having been minimal.

We had great hopes for the " Jewish Youth Federation", because sustained of several Jewish clubs, such as: the club " Continuity", " Sholem Aleichem club", " Y. L. Peretz youth club" and others. For several years, these aforementioned clubs had a positive effect on Jewish world culture; and for several years they even issued their own periodical, "Call to Youth" and in May 1948, the youth Federation issued a proclamation on our

generation of immigrants and accused them harshly: 1. They did not establish any Jewish communities according to traditional historic patterns, and generally allowed a disorganization of Jewish life, which caused the dissolution in Jewish life. 2. They did not prepare themselves to follow the ideologies of Jewish life and so to nurture our existence under the freedom of American way of life. 3. They failed to represent Judaism as a way of life to the American community, and therefore allowed the false impression that Judaism was merely a religion. 4. They failed to establish a United school system in which to educate their children, and failed to utilize to the maximum, the existing schools. And 5. They failed to train young leaders that could assume leadership, that could gradually takeover the leadership of Jewish life in America.

Despite these harsh accusations that the youth presented to the generation of immigrants and despite the Jewish culture activists that the “Jewish Federation” had initially believed and hoped that they would develop more and grow into Jewish activists, and that they would truly be able to take over the reins of our Jewish cultural life, and that they will truly become the leaders of tomorrow in our Jewish cultural life. Unfortunately, it did not turn out that way, wrote Abraham Brumberg in “Der Tag” New York, a city college student and a member of the editorial staff of “Yugnt-Ruf”.

“The Jewish Youth Federation no longer exists and the Jewish clubs in the colleges almost an entirely quit functioning. “Club Hameschech” and “Sholem Aleichem club” have disbanded. Of the few Jewish youth clubs in Canada, we hear nothing; also the academic Jewish unions that YIVO helped organize, do not meet anymore.” And he brings forth some very weighty remarks and facts concerning our Jewish youth: “the number of Jewish speaking young people is very small, and those that are

able to speak Yiddish, do not speak Yiddish among themselves, and the majority, unfortunately, do not speak Yiddish with their parents". If this is the situation among the intelligent Jewish youth, what can we expect from the hundreds of thousands youth who are entirely non-Jewish speaking? Therefore, it is no wonder that for the thousandth time we ask ourselves the same question, and we require of ourselves a soul-searching concerning our youth. We search, we ask, where is the road to perfection, is there a door open to the heart and mind of our youth?

It is close to 40 years that we, here in America started a school movement. In the course of these years a great number of children have gone through the many classes of Jewish progressive schools. Many of them, today, are themselves parents. Did the school make a deep impression upon them, did it influence their Jewish spirituality, so that they should aspire to become activists for Jewish schools and culture? What became of these thousands of students? Where are they? In which direction did they go? Why don't we see them, hear from them? Do they read a Jewish book? Do they interest themselves with Jewish questions and problems? Did we not put our hopes on these schools, which would have the power to take the place of the preceding generation, to assume the leadership and be responsible for the important work, for our Jewish culture?

These are the questions that cause consternation among the serious school and cultural activists, the serious Jewish writers and thinkers. It is enough to come to our Jewish meetings, and lectures, on the holidays, to meet with the people, and the situation in which we find ourselves becomes clear. Everywhere, familiar faces, bared heads. And this is more truth than the poetry. The Jewish intellectual and cultural activist, who is not associated with a political party, by whom national

existence, and love of Israel it is not an empty ring, and stands on a higher level than the glory of the party, for him it is not so good; he cannot dispense with it with simply a quiet sigh or a groan. He can also not be enveloped by a pseudo-religious feeling and suddenly start praying for the return to religious belief, from which he has been a lifelong disbeliever. I'm talking about the so-called national religious moods of a number of our intelligentsia. The Jewish person of culture cannot indulge himself to retire to a quiet corner of resignation and defeatism. He cannot nonchalantly look at the situation and think: "who cares?" There issues forth from his bloody heart a cry of pain, but not a feeling of resignation. His eyes are held open, full of hope, to a brighter and freer tomorrow. Therefore he seeks a road to youth; to discuss the current cultural situation, one speculates a lot and with a lot of petty argument. Some fault the younger generation, for not having any interest whatsoever in our ideals and aspirations. Others argue further, that we the parents are at fault because we have neglected our children, we let them grow like weeds; we alone tried to rescue the whole world to the detriment of our own. And others say that the parents were slaves to their children, let themselves be led, and gave in to their every whim. The children were the dictators over the parents, so therefore our influence over them is almost nil. What is important about our school, is she a slaver, is she thrust upon our children with force. To learn and to study by force. The result is we have no quality and no quantity.

Oh how different, more intense and more fruitful we all hoped our children's school would be!.... so, we have symposiums, and we look for different cures for the ailment. We say that the up to date modern methods of teaching, have bankrupted, not freed us. We call back the very beginning methods, to religious Judaism. "Oneg Shabbat", "Shomrei Shabbat" and all things that

were connected to the old way of life. Maybe from this, our youth could benefit.

In his writing in the "Tsukunft {Future}" symposium concerning this issue, Jacob Glatshetyn comes to the following conclusions:

[a] We wish to create spiritual bridges which will connect our children with the children in Israel, they should become knowledgeable Jews. This is their rationale and their importance. So what is his suggestion?

[b] We need to change our current way of looking at things and to orient ourselves differently. Education must leave the experimental and parochial stage. This is very logical and why it is. So what really needs to be done? He comes to the following prognosis:

[c] We must turn in the direction of the religion and not be satisfied with the crumbs of Judaism as we have to the present, the dregs of Judaism. We must consider this seriously, and we must begin to pray in Yiddish. In the synagogue let our children have a religious connection to our language. Jewish education must be united with Jewish faith, not in storybooks as we do now, but on a religious basis.